

Qubbet el-Hawa 2016

Bommas, Martin; Khalifa, Eman; Nagy, Essam

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QUBBET EL-HAWA, 2016

By Martin Bommas

Report of two short field seasons of the joint University of Birmingham/Egypt Exploration Society mission at Qubbet el-Hawa in February and September 2016. In the area of the northern necropolis, below the upper terrace of rock cut tombs, three excavation areas were identified that have not been investigated before. Among the monuments unearthed are a protection wall close to the edge of the cliff, a causeway leading to this wall, and the long-sought causeway of Sarenput I. Amongst the finds presented here, two Middle Kingdom reliefs and pottery are discussed in further detail

مارتن بوماس
قبة الهوا، موسم 2016

تقرير عن موسمين قصيرين للحفائر للبعثة الأثرية المشتركة بين جامعة برمنجهام وجمعية أستكشاف مصر العاملة بقبة الهوا خلال شهري فبراير وسبتمبر عام ٢٠١٦. في منطقة الجبانة الشمالية، أسفل المستوى الأعلى للمقابر المنحوتة في الصخر، تم تحديد ثلاثة مناطق لم يتم دراستها من قبل. تتضمن المكتشفات جداراً واقعاً بمحاذاة حافة الهضبة وطريقاً صاعداً مؤدياً للجدار بالإضافة إلى الطريق الصاعد المؤدي لمقبرة سارنبوت الأول. ويعرض التقرير نقشين من عصر الدولة الوسطى بالإضافة للمكتشفات الفخارية والتي يتم ذكرها بشيء من التفصيل.

THE West bank of the Nile opposite the modern city of Aswan is known as Qubbet el-Hawa, a burial site that was in uninterrupted use from at least the Fourth Dynasty until the Roman Period. What looks like a huge sand dune protruding into the Nile is, in fact, a hill consisting of massive layers of sandstone of heterogeneous quality, which, however, was mostly sufficient to allow for the construction of rock-cut tombs, especially in the higher areas. The place owes its name to the landmark tomb of Sheikh Aly Abu el-Hawa which crowns the necropolis, the 'dome of the wind'. Indeed, strong northerly winds lead to the constant dispersal of desert sand across the entire necropolis.

Despite the fact that the site was noted in the *Description de l'Égypte*, a series of publications which first appeared in 1809 as the scientific by-product of Napoleon's military campaign in Egypt between 1798 and 1801 (fig. 1), scholars took note of the site relatively late. Amongst the earlier excavators were General Francis Grenfell (1885), Ernesto Schiaparelli (1892), Jacques de Morgan (early 1890s), and Lady William Cecil together with Howard Carter (early 1900s), before Labib Habachi commenced work between 1946 and 1952. His field notes are published in passing in Elmar Edel's seminal publication of his own work at Qubbet el-Hawa between 1959 and the early 1980s, the most comprehensive publication of the site.¹ Various digs carried out by local inspectors, notably Abdel-Hakim, have never been published, with the exception

¹ E. Edel, *Die Felsgräbernekropole der Qubbet el-Hawa bei Assuan* (Paderborn, 2008). The history of research until 2008 is summed up on pp xvii–xxii.

of one Old Kingdom mastaba tomb close to the modern earth road between Gharb Aswan (West-Aswan) and the local ferry port.² Since 2008, an archaeological mission from the University of Jaén has been excavating at Qubbet el-Hawa.³ In more recent years extensive looting has become a major threat to the site of Qubbet el-Hawa after the so-called Arab Spring in 2011, when illegal digging led to the opening and clearing of tombs found in the area around the Aga Khan mausoleum and to the north, in the vicinity of the south-western extension of Gharb Aswan. Since 2015 the University of Birmingham/Egypt Exploration Society joint mission has been studying the area.

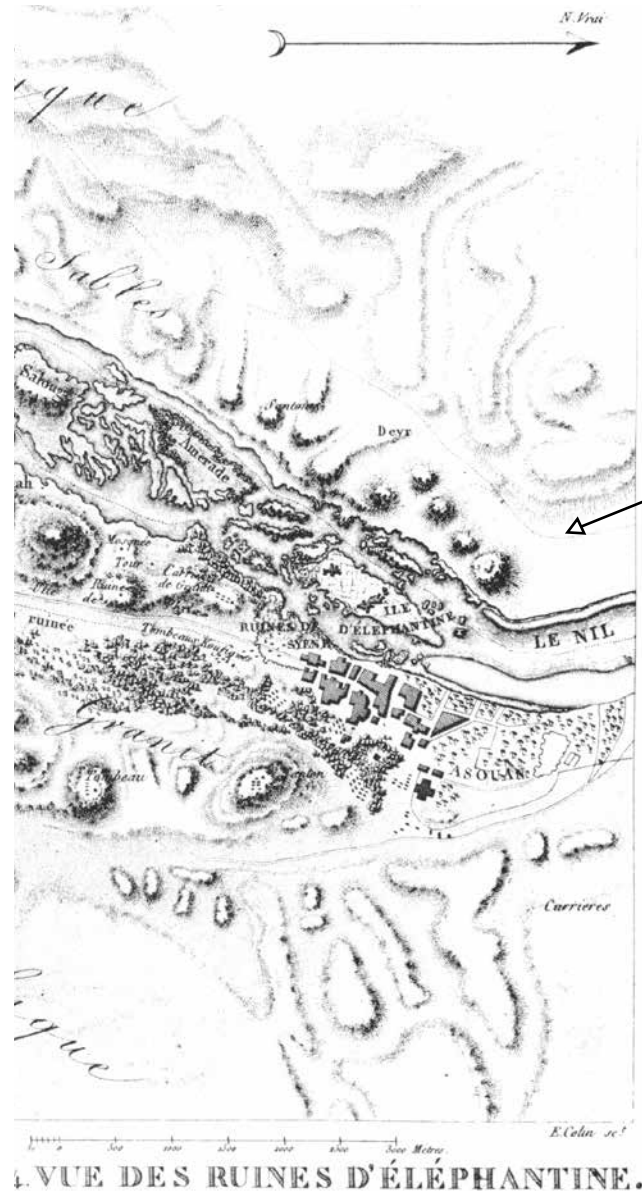


FIG. 1. *Description de l'Égypte*, I (Paris, 1809), 30.3, showing the northern extension of Qubbet el-Hawa at the right. The causeway of Khunes (see arrow) was already visible during the seventeenth century, or perhaps even never fully covered by sand.

² M. el-Din, 'Discovery of a Tomb of the Late Old Kingdom below the Rock Tombs of Qubbet el-Hawa, Aswân', *MDAIK* 50 (1994), 31–4.

³ A. Jiménez Serrano, 'Das Projekt der Universidad de Jaén auf der Qubbet el-Hawa. Neue Ansätze zum Totenkult im Alten Ägypten', in L. D. Morenz, M. Höveler-Müller, and A. el-Hawary (eds), *Zwischen den Welten. Grabfunde von Ägyptens Südgrenze* (Bonn, 2011), 182–97.

In 2016, two short field seasons took place, a photographic survey from 8 to 18 February, and cleaning and mapping from 4 to 22 September. Permanent members of the mission are Martin Bommas (director of the Qubbet el-Hawa Research Project, University of Birmingham), Essam Nagy (co-director, EES Cairo Office), and Eman Khalifa (ceramologist and residue analyst, Cairo University). In September, the project was joined by the surveyor Mohamed el-Baset. Two Ministry of Antiquities inspectors (Ahmed Fouad in February and Mohamed Abd el-Raziq in September) were responsible for the fieldwork, Hoda Kamal inked our drawings. Funding came largely through the University of Birmingham, the Egypt Exploration Society, London, and private donors.

1. Choice of the site

Instead of concentrating on known tombs or areas that have been touched by scholars before, the archaeological work carried out under the name of Qubbet el-Hawa Research Project (QHRP) focuses on an area never before under investigation. In its south-north extension it reaches from the southern wall of the causeway of Khunes (tomb 34h)⁴ to the northern wall of the causeway of the tomb of Sarenput I (tomb 36).⁵ From east to west, the concession boundary is defined by a series of lamp installations east of the visitor pathway and the modern earth road mentioned above.⁶



FIG. 2. The area between the causeways of Khunes and Sarenput I as seen from the River Nile.

⁴ Edel, *Felsgräbernekropole*, 537. Edel refers to the causeway of Khunes only briefly and it can still be regarded as un-researched despite the fact that false doors and shrines lining up on both sides of the stairs carry numbers.

⁵ For a bibliography for tomb 36 see Edel, *Felsgräbernekropole*, 967.

⁶ While the western border of our concession has been reconfirmed by the Permanent Committee during a site visit on 22 September 2016, the eastern border is defined by the modern road connecting the ferry terminal with the villages of Gharb Aswan.

Before work started the area of our concession looked unassuming. A first survey carried out in 1990⁷ revealed that previous archaeologists, when working on tombs located at the first, upper terrace, disposed of rubble but also unwanted archaeological artefacts on the first metres of the slope extending from the western edge of the first terrace down to the river bank. Both the face of the rock and archaeological remains, therefore, are covered with a thick package of sand, rubble and random artefacts along their entire north-southern extension. This modern fill made it an unattractive research site to previous archaeologists, due to the large financial means necessary to excavate the site as a whole. Therefore, until the time when work commenced in 2016, the site was largely untouched, and as a result no documented archaeological work had been carried out. No mission working at Qubbet el-Hawa has published preliminary archaeological reports on a regular basis so far.

II. Aims and objectives

The chosen site offers a number of unique research opportunities to investigate specific aspects of funerary beliefs, architectural development and social interaction, which have never been addressed in one specific place in the Aswan area before and, indeed, even outside the confines of the region. The first objective is to establish evidence for the existence of a second terrace below the known tombs extending from the tomb of Khunes (34h) to the tomb of Sarenput (36) (see below ‘Site A’). The good-quality sandstone, as found at the top end of the causeway of Khunes and from which the builders of the tomb of Setka (110) benefited equally,⁸ extends further to the north and into our concession, as the north wall of the Khunes causeway shows. South of that causeway, tombs of the First Intermediate Period and even tombs predating tomb 110 prove the existence of a second and even third terrace,⁹ which are likely to extend beyond the causeway of Khunes. As with the tombs of the second terrace further to the south, an extension to the north might have been the location of other burials dating to the period between the late Old Kingdom and early Middle Kingdom. Due to the archaeological situation observed, entrances to these tombs are to be expected within the western border of our concession. Whether or not the tombs of several owners of monuments within the Sanctuary of Heqaib on the island of Elephantine,¹⁰ still unaccounted for at Qubbet el-Hawa, are to be found in this area can obviously not be predicted at this point.

Despite its vast north-south expansion, hardly anything is known about architecture at the foot of the hill, east of the first terrace below the tomb of Heqaib.¹¹ The second

⁷ Consecutive ground surveys were carried out by the Director of the QHRP in 2003, 2008, 2013 and 2015.

⁸ Tomb 110 is one of the best documented tombs of Qubbet el-Hawa, dating into the First Intermediate Period, s. Edel, *Felsgräbernekropole*, 1715–815.

⁹ Edel, *Felsgräbernekropole*, xxix, points to the fact that especially gallery tombs fell victim to successive rock-cut tombs. According to K.-J. Seyfried (pers. comm., March 1991), some of the shafts of the Fifth Dynasty that Edel encountered during his work cut into Fourth Dynasty tombs at a lower level, thus highlighting the competition for good-quality rock in the southern part of the necropolis.

¹⁰ L. Habachi, *The Sanctuary of Heqaib* (Mainz, 1985); D. Franke, *Das Heiligtum des Heqaib auf Elephantine: Geschichte eines Provinzheiligtums im Mittleren Reich* (Heidelberg, 1994). Elephantine, former home of those who were buried at Qubbet el-Hawa, is a key site for the understanding of the archaeology but also social connections of the cemeteries in West-Aswan. Since 1969, the German Archaeological Institute, Cairo, together with the Swiss Institute for Architectural and Archaeological Research on Ancient Egypt, Cairo, have worked intensively on Elephantine and published detailed preliminary reports as well as monographs of fundamental importance.

¹¹ The only exception is the mastaba tomb published by El-Din, *MDAIK* 50.

aim therefore is to investigate the infrastructure (Site B) and tombs (Site C) belonging to what we now call the Lower Necropolis of Qubbet el-Hawa. It will be crucial to understand these monuments as places of social communication and memory in addition to their function as burial places. The lower necropolis gives crucial insights into how the living institutionalised their relations with the dead and how the concept of urbanisation shaped the making of a city of the dead. As an architectural expression of the ancient Egyptian concept of the tripartite world—consisting of the worlds of the living, the dead, and the gods—the lower necropolis at Qubbet el-Hawa shows how the long-lost middle class in the region of the First Upper Egyptian Nome and Elephantine managed to negotiate social status and dependency as well as identity and memory.

Thirdly, it will be paramount to follow the eastern extension of the causeway of the tomb of Sarenput I (36) and identify its entrance. The causeway's architecture, especially its role as a link between the Memphite royal burial traditions of the Old Kingdom and a *lieu de mémoire* after its first phase of use during the burial of Sarenput I, will be a focal study area for the Qubbet el-Hawa Research Project.

On the whole, the QHRP aims at contributing to our understanding of social interaction and memory, funerary rituals and the organisation of a necropolis between the late Old Kingdom and the Twelfth Dynasty. Located at the southern border of Egypt, where Elephantine played a key administrative role in establishing the area as the main corridor into Africa, Qubbet el-Hawa was the main burial place for people belonging to what tentatively can be called the lower-middle to upper class. Traditional Egyptological methodologies as well as interdisciplinary approaches, such as chemical analysis of objects and vessel contents, will be key to deliver insights into under-researched aspects of Qubbet el-Hawa and those buried there as one of the most developed and archaeologically rich cemeteries of Pharaonic Egypt.

III. Site survey (Essam Nagy)

The concession of the QHRP measures 128.5 m x 185.5 m (north-south and east-west, respectively; fig. 3). As part of a photographic survey in 2016, the drafting of a map of this complex and diverse site was identified as an essential part of work prior to any in-depth archaeological activity in the area. Given that the area within our work permit had never been studied before, one of our aims was to document the borders of our concession and to identify the archaeological evidence in this area, resulting from the first seasons in 2016. As no survey points had been published in the entire area of Qubbet el-Hawa so far, we had to start work by creating new survey stations and survey points, using a hand-held GPS and total station. In doing so, we documented the south-north extension of the concession (the southern wall of the Khunes causeway and the causeway of Sarenput I) as well as the east-west extension (the modern earth road and the top part of the first terrace), and the causeway of Site B (see below; figs 2 and 3). In order to add points of reference to areas already known, key points of the first terrace and the outer walls of the open court of the New Kingdom tomb of Kakemu in the north were added.¹²

¹² It is hoped that in the future a general plan, coverage of the entire necropolis, can be achieved.

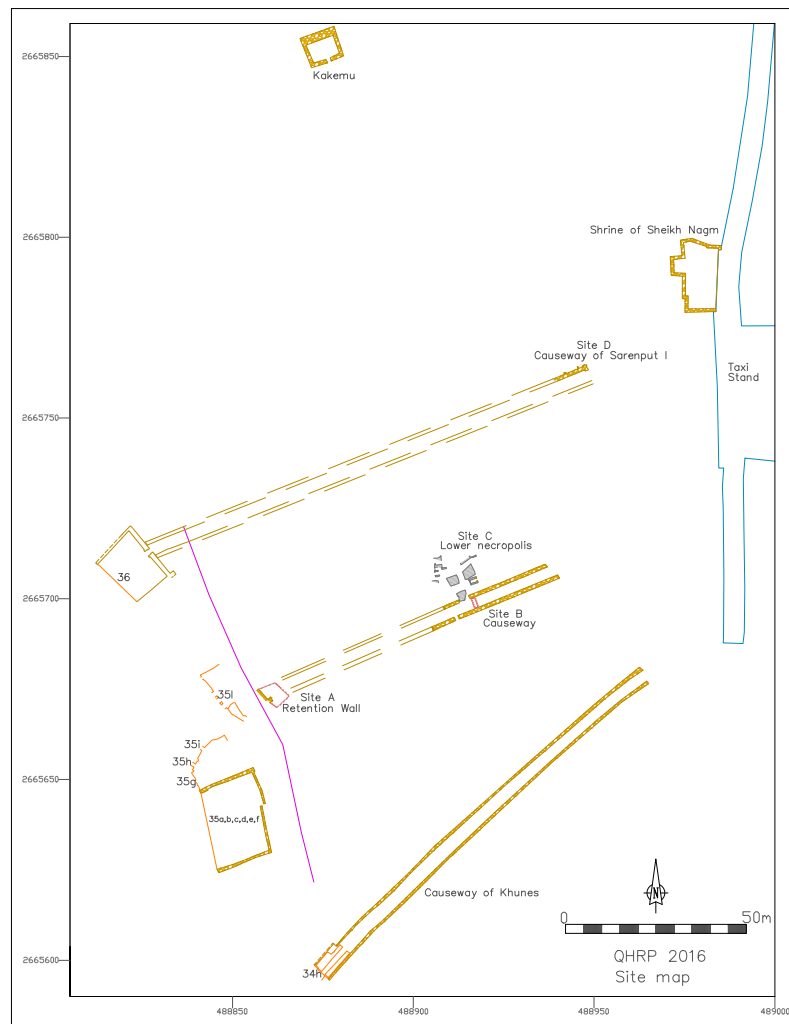


FIG. 3. Qubbet el-Hawa Research Project site map

As excavations were soon to change the landscape of the site by returning to levels of ancient times, we also created a contour map in order to gather information about the nature of the east-west slope, covering a total elevation of 34 m (fig. 4). This topographic map not only documents the situation in 2016 in an area changing considerably every year, especially given the movements of desert sand (see above),¹³ it also provides crucial information about the filling of the site by archaeologists previously working in the area of the slope, the appearance of which was changed considerably by tossing down rubble and unwanted archaeological remains during the twentieth century.

Both maps not only complement each other but are regarded as essential tools to constantly monitor and document archaeological activities in an area where no documented work took place before. Regular and systematic updates will become crucial in order to locate future finds within their original context. Furthermore, future excavation sites within the QHRP's concession and in addition to Sites A–D discussed in this report will be fit to the existing plans presented here.

¹³ For this purpose it was decided to add the contours of the area north of the causeway of Sarenput I. According to Inspector Osama Amr, recent excavations in this area revealed no archaeological remains (pers. comm., 16 February 2016).

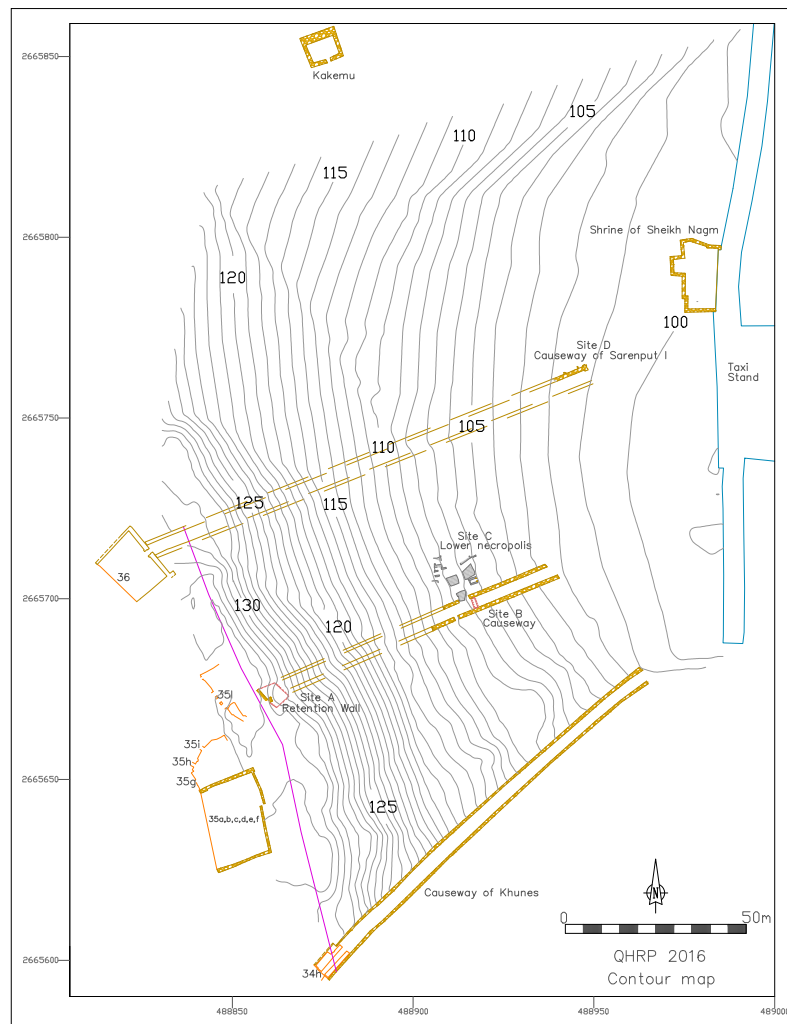


FIG. 4. Contour map of the east-west slope.

iv. Excavation areas (Martin Bommas)

Site A

Below the first terrace and in line with the south-eastern corner of tomb 35l (see fig. 3), a number of carefully laid field stones have been visible at least since 2003 (fig. 5). However, it seems that this evidence did not attract the attention of archaeologists previously working at Qubbet el-Hawa.

In an attempt to achieve further understanding of the site, wind-blown sand and a thick package of rubble, mainly consisting of sandstone chips was removed. Within this layer, which must have been deposited in modern times, faience beads, painted fragments of wooden coffin boards, as well as Late Period and occasional Middle Kingdom pottery¹⁴ were found alongside modern trash consisting of plastic items and cigarette packs.¹⁵ The structure itself is an L-shaped, man-made wall on a foundation

¹⁴ See E. Khalifa's report below.

¹⁵ Ubiquitous fragments of Cleopatra cigarette packs allowed dating the deposit to the late 1970s and 1980s, which matches the time period of Elmar Edel's activities in the area.



FIG. 5. Site A and B as seen in 2003. Note the continuous progression of the upper causeway, which is covered under desert sand today.



FIG. 6. Retention wall showing stepped courses, built to stabilise the area below the upper terrace of tombs.

layer of desert sand and small pieces of charcoal. The wall displays irregular masonry consisting of a mixture of smaller and larger blocks, randomly packed.¹⁶ Carefully sourced sandstone blocks that required only a minimum of stone masonry, and very hard layers of cement, consisting of pulverised limestone, sand and ground pottery, further add stability to a construction that otherwise aimed at saving stone material instead of using stones of the same size and shape (fig. 6).

In its current state, the wall is 220 cm high. Its northern extension is still unknown, as further heaps of rubble will have to be removed before clarity can be achieved about the size and the overall height of the building. At this early point, however, three major aspects can be observed: first, the monumental size of the wall; second, the concave building construction; and, third, the L-shaped design. All aspects combined efficiently increase the stability of the wall, allowing it to take heavy weight imposed on monuments on lower levels. It is plausible that this wall functioned as a means to protect the first terrace and its installations from collapsing as a result of building activities at the lower level. For structural reasons, the retention wall in Site A can be dated to a period when, first, tomb building at the upper terrace became limited due to the lack of space and, second, when building tombs at a second, lower, terrace had become a reality.

Some of the installations of the first terrace included forecourts of the tombs built there. Most of them might well have been removed in ancient times to make space for housing projects inviting new inhabitants in Coptic times. Today, even these secondary buildings have been removed to make way for the visitors' pathway cutting through open courts that were once established in this area.

It is therefore clear that architecture below the retention wall was deemed worth protecting from falling debris in ancient times. As a result, the existence of the wall described above, located in the centre of a necropolis consisting of rock-cut tombs, proves the existence of a second terrace of tombs. The existence of these tombs is further attested by the archaeological evidence identified within Site B (see below). To judge from the evidence visible south of the causeway of Khunes, various types of tombs can be expected within the area of the second terrace.

Site B

In addition to the encroachment wall built to protect the eastern extensions of tombs (from south to north) 351-n and possibly even beyond,¹⁷ further evidence proves the existence of a second terrace of tombs below Site A. Site B is currently defined by two walls built of tightly fitted local rough rubble. Both run from east to west over a distance of at least 87 m. Each wall is 80 cm wide, its height is not known yet.¹⁸ The passage width is 3 m, generous enough to allow for traffic, including the transport of heavy and bulky goods during funerary procession and of building material. Given the widths of the causeways of Sabni (2.85 m), Mekhu (3.95 m), Khunes (3–4 m) and Sarenput I. (3.1 m), there can be no doubt that the architecture dominating Site B is a causeway, too. Like Sites A, C, and D, this causeway, despite being visible for a very

¹⁶ This type of building usually leads to a lack of stability. However, built as a concave wall it was designed to produce enough counterbalance to prevent the slope from moving.

¹⁷ The northern extension of this wall is currently not known.

¹⁸ The upper edge of both walls has been consistently levelled. So far, no debris has been identified in this area.

long time (see above fig. 5), has not attracted the attention of archaeologists previously working in the area.¹⁹ Both walls show openings, one in the southern wall (70 cm wide), two in the northern wall (95 cm [east] and 75 cm [west]).

As older photographs and this year's geophysical survey show (figs 2 and 3), the causeway of Site B leads up to the retention wall, the eastern extension of which forms a direct line with the southern wall of the causeway. Since there is no reason to assume that a causeway, traditionally giving access to rock-cut tombs high up in the cliffs, merely led to a wall, it is to be concluded that in this particular case the causeway of Site B reaches tombs located below the retention wall. Due to differences in the landscape, the three causeways in the north of Qubbet el-Hawa are considerably longer²⁰ than the ones in the southern necropolis belonging to Sabni (60 m) and Mekhu (70 m). As mentioned above, both Sites A and B prove the existence of a second terrace of tombs which still await excavation.²¹

Site C

The two openings in the northern wall of the causeway (Site B) currently give access to six mastaba tombs visible at the foot of the hill (fig. 4). These tombs are spread over three tiers and extend toward the north. As the openings are in line with two roads beside which these tombs line up, they can be identified as gates leading into a necropolis currently covering an area of currently 24 x 18 m. No cleaning or excavation has been carried out in this area so far. Located at the foot of the hill, the eastern extension of the rock formation, the cemetery is built on drifts into an area where the bedrock is of decreasing quality. Here, burial chambers, approached through stone reinforced entrances, are cut from the bedrock. Superstructures consist of sloped outer walls that show fragments of thick white slips, thus giving the mud-brick-built tombs the appearance of being made from limestone. Small open courts before the entrances and defined by *temenos* walls allowed 3–4 people to congregate in front of each tomb. The lower necropolis awaits further investigation in the near future.

Site D

At the northern border of our concession, stone structures came to light during this year's survey. As we were able to predict both their existence and relative position before applying for a work permit, we defined this structure as the northern border of the QHRP's concession already in 2015. The structures we were able to identify consist of two walls, both running in a west-eastern direction, in the following referred to as North Wall and South Wall.

The North Wall is preserved over a length of 11 m in a direct line and shows a maximum height of 71 cm (figs 7 and 8).

¹⁹ The site map published in Edel, *Felsengräbernekropole* shows a short section of one of the two walls which can now be graphically reconstructed using the evidence from Sites A and B. A site map published by the team from the University of Jaén likewise does not show the wall in its entirety (A. Jiménez Serrano, in L. D. Morenz et al., *Zwischen den Welten*, 183) as known from older photographs, suggesting that parts of the wall have been covered by sand between the years 2003 and 2008.

²⁰ From south to north Khunes (120 m), Site B (> 87 m) and Sarenput I (133 m).

²¹ Depending on when their entrances were covered with desert sand, the possibility to find these tombs intact is not small. Despite the heavy looting Qubbet el-Hawa faced after the Arab Spring, no illicit digging occurred on the site by the time of writing this field report.



FIG. 7. North wall of the causeway of the tomb of Sarenput I (tombs 36), entrance.

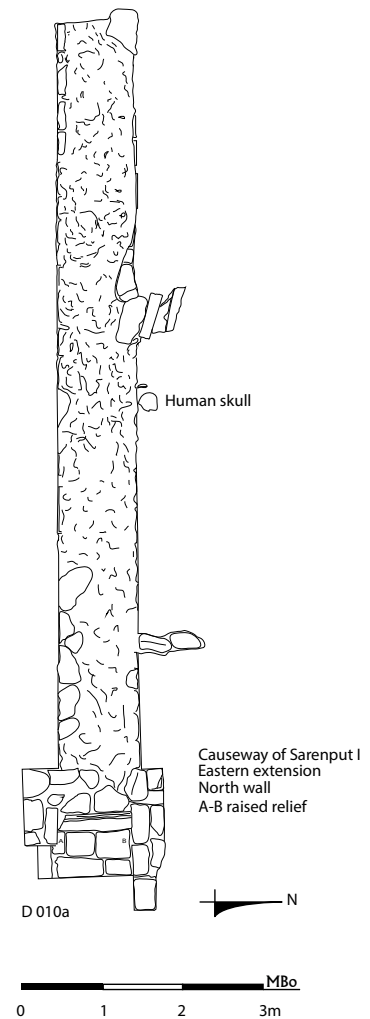


FIG. 8. Drawing of the north wall of the causeway of Sarenput I.

Its passage width is *c.* 3 m, its western extension is built of carefully laid rough field stones which show no further signs of treatment. Its eastern extension ends in a decorated headstone of 56 x 94 cm, facing visitors approaching from the east (for a more detailed analysis, see below). It is flanked by two projection walls reaching out 20 cm and framing the headstone. These projection walls rest on a platform made of carefully laid sandstone slabs, creating a niche for display purposes. As the site map (fig. 3) shows, the North Wall can be connected with the eastern extension of the stairs leading into the open court tomb of Sarenput I (tomb 36) from the Middle Kingdom Twelfth Dynasty.²² To judge from the width of the causeway of Sarenput I at the bottom end of these steps, the width of the causeway at its eastern extension can be assumed to have been *c.* 3.1 m. The inside walls of the causeway were at least to some extent decorated with sunk relief, as two fragments showing an inscription attest (see below). With a total length of 133 m, the causeway of Sarenput I is the longest causeway at Qubbet el-Hawa.

²² North of the North Wall surface cleaning revealed a human skull which has been documented (see fig. 8) but left *in situ* and covered with desert sand for protective reasons.

A test trench dug south of the North Wall revealed the relative position of the South Wall. As loosely positioned field stones show, the South Wall had collapsed at some point in time. So far, and prior to excavations, the lack of a pattern of these field stones does not help to suggest the precise position of the wall. However, the date of its destruction might be indicated by a deposit of pottery in its vicinity. South of the South Wall, a nest of well-preserved and complete vessels was found, including large pots and a lid.²³ The collapse of the South Wall might have been unintentional given the fact that the North Wall is preserved to an impressive extent.

v. Selected finds

Fragments of an inscription from the causeway of Sarenput I

South of the North Wall (see above, Site D), in the midst of the surface desert sand, two fragments of an inscribed stone panel were found (see figs 9 and 10). The fragments are a close fit, and their combined measurements are 18.6 x 10.3 x 8.1 cm. They are of yellow sandstone, which suggests non-local provenance. The fragments carry a register line on the right and remains of an inscription on the left, carried out in column writing, reading *im.y-rʿ hm.w [ntr n St.t]*, ‘overseer of the [priests of Satet]’. This title is in line with Sarenput I’s standard titulary as displayed in the inscriptions of his architrave.²⁴

The fact that the title *im.y-rʿ* is written with the tongue sign (Gardiner F20) further suggests a date of the inscription during the time of Sesostri I, thus serving as additional proof for the identification of these fragments as belonging to Sarenput I. So far, the earliest evidence of this new orthography appears in the 10th regnal year of Sesostri I.²⁵ This date serves well as a *terminus ante quem* for the building of both the causeway and tomb,²⁶ as Sarenput I does not seem to have come to power before Sesostri I’s rule and the reorganisation of the administration of Egypt. This new piece of evidence suggests that the decoration of the tomb had started after year 10.

Decorated headstone of the causeway of Sarenput I

The eastern extension of the North Wall of the causeway of Sarenput I is marked by a decorated headstone, fitted into the niche at the right side of the entrance (figs 8, 11 and 12).

Different from the local stones employed to build the causeway, the headstone was clearly chosen as showpiece, as it represents one of the rare examples for the use of so-called blue sandstone. Originating from the Shatt es-Saba Rigal,²⁷ blue sandstone, which is denser and therefore harder to dress than other types of sandstone, was first imported and used in the Cataract Region during the reign of Mentuhotep II and the construction of the temple for the local goddess Satet.²⁸ There, prominent architectural features were highlighted by the use of

²³ One of the lids shows visible black organic residues. Further investigation of the finds, including residue analysis, will determine their type and date, revealing glimpses of the development of the cemetery of Qubbet el-Hawa at various times of use. Research on these finds will also aim at precisely dating the collapse of the wall and the nature of this convolute of late pharaonic pottery.

²⁴ E.g. line 1, see A. H. Gardiner, ‘Inscriptions from the Tomb of Si-renpowet I, Prince of Elephantine’, *ZÄS* 45 (1908), pl. vi.

²⁵ W. Schenkel, *Mittelägyptische Studien* (Bonn, 1962), 36.

²⁶ This orthography is also attested on the tomb façade, right of doorway, see Gardiner, *ZÄS* 45, pl. viii (F).

²⁷ This quarry is opposite Silwa Bahari, 30 km north of Kom Ombo, 73 km north of Aswan.

²⁸ Apart from the walls itself, blue sandstone was also used for the construction of the water channel which



FIG. 9. Sandstone fragments from the causeway of Sarenput I, bearing one of his titles. Sunk relief.

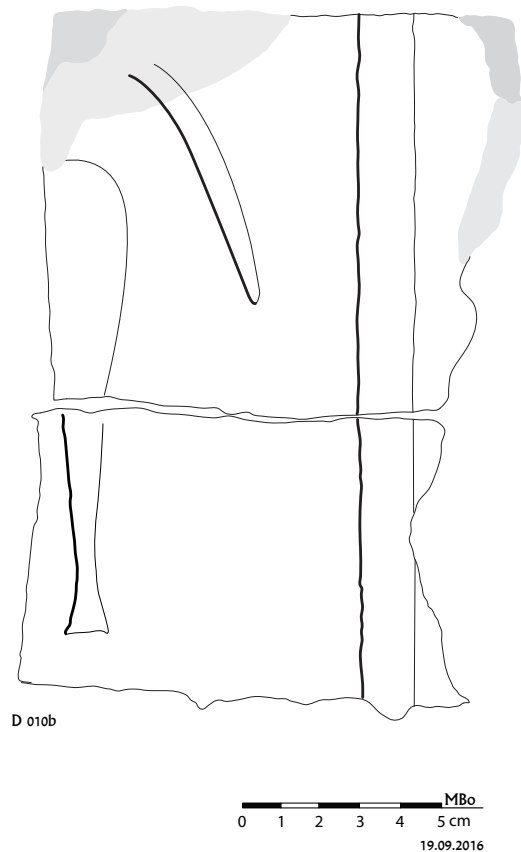


FIG. 10. Line drawing of sandstone fragments from the causeway of Sarenput I.

blue sandstone, the colours of which are a direct match with the headstone from Sarenput I's causeway.²⁹ This choice of building material for the causeway, but also architraves found in the tombcourt of Sarenput I, firstly suggest that the construction of tomb 36 had started when work commenced on the temple of Satet, to which the family of Sarenput undoubtedly had access. Sarenput I's titulary shows his own affiliation with the gods in his role as overseer of her priests (see above).

Secondly, the choice of building material also suggests that the construction of the tomb predates the investiture of Sarenput I as governor under Sesostri I, whose buildings are marked by the intensive use of limestone. The shift from the use of blue sandstone (Mentuhotep II) to limestone (Sesostri I) is now traceable in the buildings of the tomb and causeway of the tomb of Sarenput I.³⁰ Thirdly, this find suggests that causeways were built alongside the constructions of the actual tombs, which also makes sense from the point of access routes to building sites. By the time Sarenput I became governor of Elephantine, limestone was the more fashionable building material and was used to showcase his rank

ran underneath her temple, see M. Bommas, 'Untersuchungen im Bereich der Verbindungstreppe zwischen den Tempeln des Chnum und der Satet', W. Kaiser et al. (eds), 'Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine, 23./24. Grabungsbericht', *MDAIK* 53 (1997), 145 and n. 104.

²⁹ Colorimetrical analysis according to the Munsell system revealed 10YR 5/2 (greyish brown), see A. H. Munsell, *Munsell Soil-Color Charts* (Michigan, 2010). Analysis was carried out with objects facing the same cardinal direction and at the same time of the day (10 a.m.).

³⁰ The door jambs at the upper end of the causeway include the use of limestone. However, as the numerous inclusions of flint suggest, the quality of its stone is inferior to that used for the construction of the temple of Satet during the reign of Sesostri I.



FIG. 11. Niche of the northern entrance into the causeway of Sarenput I, showing three men driving an ox (raised relief, blue sandstone).

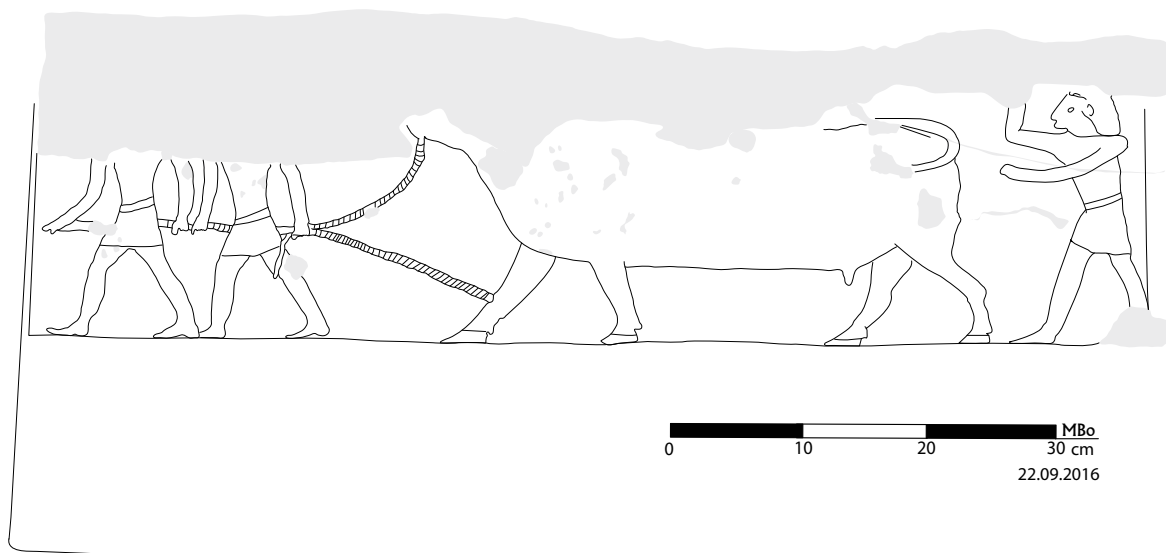


FIG. 12. Line drawing of the headstone of the northern wall of the causeway of Sarenput I, eastern extension.

and political influence. At the same time, stones of the best quality were reserved for Satet and not her 'overseer of priests' as the stone fragments discussed above suggest.

The surviving part of the headstone shows the driving of an ox in raised relief. Two men stride out quickly and in large steps to the left, heading towards the entrance of the causeway. The first man holds a rope in both of his hands, attached to the ox's head. The second man grabs the same rope with his right hand but also holds a second, much shorter one in his left hand, attached to the animal's right foreleg. As the longer rope does not form a straight line the ox is not pulled with force but moves—at least to some extent—deliberately, or pushed by the third man walking behind the animal shouting and perhaps waving a stick of some sort, which might have been painted and therefore has disappeared today (no traces of colour have survived). The lively scene of driving an ox forms part of the catalogue of scenes found in a funerary context to ensure the tomb owner's well-being after death through a display of generous provisions. Indeed, the ox shown in the relief of Sarenput I dominates the scene, which does not focus on the actions of the three men responsible for the animal's transport.

The vivid scene displayed on the causeway's headstone is in line with the expressive narrative developing in late Old Kingdom funerary art. Fine examples of provincial funerary art and predecessors to the relief discussed here can be found e.g. in Meir, where tomb chapel A, no. 2 shows examples of similar scenes³¹ which were at the same time even further developed in an attempt to challenge firmly established representational conventions.³² It is different, however, from the so-called 'second style' of Egyptian art established from the late Sixth Dynasty throughout the First Intermediate Period,³³ examples of which are ubiquitous within tombs at Qubbet el-Hawa.³⁴

With regard to a date to the Middle Kingdom, the relief discussed here lacks the refined style of raised reliefs from the reign of Sesostri I, the most outstanding example of which is displayed in the so-called *chapelle blanche* in Karnak, and is therefore likely to predate the later rule of Sesostri I. This conclusion is further confirmed by the use of blue sandstone which was outdated and, by the beginning of the reign of Sesostri I, perhaps even exhausted in the single quarry it came from. However, the focus on specific aspects within artwork to convey information by exaggeration, and the unconstrained and easy use of motion to elaborate complex narratives is certainly an aspect that defines pre-Sesostri I funerary art. This observation is in line with the date of the decoration of the walls of this monument around year 10 of the reign of Sesostri I (see above), suggesting that work on the headstone might have started earlier. As far as early Twelfth Dynasty funerary art is concerned, the headstone of Sarenput's I causeway is the southernmost example ever found in Egypt so far. At the same time it is the easternmost relief to come to light at Qubbet el-Hawa.

³¹ The tomb chapel of Pepiankh Black Heni is one of the most advanced tombs in Meir both for its descriptive decoration as well as texts (s. F. Simon's article in this volume). Especially the scene showing the driving of oxen before the observing tomb owner can be regarded as a starting point of the expressive rendering of this motif, see A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, V (London, 1953), pl. xli (second register from top).

³² See e.g. the tomb of Pepiankh The Middle One (N. Kanawati, *The Cemetery of Meir, I: The Tomb of Pepiankh the Middle* [Oxford, 2012]).

³³ S. E. Russmann, 'A Second Style of Egyptian Art of the Old Kingdom', in *MDAIK* 51 (1995), 269–79; K. Myśliwiec, 'A Contribution to the Second Style on Old Kingdom Art', in S. H. D'Auria (ed.), *Servant of Mut: Studies on Honor of Richard A. Fazzini* (Leiden, 2008), 170–8.

³⁴ See amongst many others: Tomb 34k, north wall of the burial chamber, scene 1 (Edel, *Felsgräbernekropole*, I, 606, fig. 1 (Pepi II).

**Pottery: preliminary report
(Eman Khalifa)**

A small number of pottery sherds from two different points of Site B at Qubbet el-Hawa (QeH) were studied and recorded in the period between 17 and 19 September. The two groups form a total of 20 sherds. These will be used to help define general time periods of use of the cemetery. Each sherd was individually recorded by clay, surface treatment, size, form and vessel type where possible. All sherds were photographed and only two drawings were made. Notes were also made on the kind of activity the discovered forms reflect to have taken place within various parts of the cemetery.

The QeH pottery forms a particularly welcome set of evidence, as it provides a contrast to the pottery from Elephantine Island. The initial analysis shows that cemetery pottery includes a few types that are common on the Island, which were used to provide general dating for the use of the cemetery in the absence of strata. Diagnostic sherds were compared and classified in line with Elephantine Island's general classification, then analysed in relation to their general fabric classification (Nile silt or marl clay).

Potsherds from the cemetery examined during this field season showed a mixed content, dating from the Old Kingdom to the Late Period and even modern times. In general, the assemblage is dominated by open forms in addition to bread-moulds. The surface treatment of the open forms is mainly red-coating. This reflects activities related to food-serving and preparation of bread, probably for offerings. It is perhaps related to the phenomenon of jointly celebrating elite funerals known to have taken place within the cemetery during the first half of the reign of Pepi II.³⁵ Despite the excellent state of preservation, the majority of sherds tend to be relatively small in comparison to the size of the complete pots from which they originated.

The first group included 14 sherds weighing 0.425 kg. These include seven diagnostic Nile silt sherds and eight non-diagnostic body sherds. The latter category has six sherds of bread-moulds, two of which can be identified as Middle Kingdom elongated forms. The absence of rims, however, does not allow for more specific dating. The wall thickness varies between 33.72 mm and 13.33 mm. Two of the non-diagnostic sherds were too small for any form of identification beyond the fabric, which is Nile silt.

The diagnostics include three rim sherds of bowls, two with rounded rims and red-coating on both of its surfaces. The third has a simple rim and self-slip on both the interior and exterior surfaces. The small size of the sherds does not allow for the measuring of the diameter. A body-sherd from the bent part of a carinated bowl is among the diagnostics. This piece is approximately 60 mm in length with red (2.5 YR 5/8)³⁶ coating/slip on both surfaces. Despite the absence of a rim, a rough outline can be reconstructed. This profile is similar to bent bowls from Elephantine Island's phase E-4. This pottery phase dates to the late Eleventh/early Twelfth Dynasty and is characterized by a general scheme of red coating.³⁷ The fabric is similar to Elephantine's

³⁵ E. Edel, *Die Felsengräber der Qubbet el-Hawa bei Assuan, II: Die Topfaufschriften* (Wiesbaden, 1980); D. Raue, 'Who Was Who in Elephantine of the Third Millennium BC', *BMSAES* 9 (2008), 1–14.

³⁶ According to Munsell, *Soil-Color*.

³⁷ D. Raue, 'Zu den Keramikfunden der frühdynastischen Zeit und des Alten Reiches', in P. Kopp (ed.), *Elephantine, XXIV: Funde und Befunde aus der Umgebung des Satettempels. Grabungen 2006–2009* (AV 104), 224–91 (in print).

NB1b, which includes organic temper.³⁸ This particular example, however, has visible pieces of crushed shell or bone.

Among this group of sherds is a piece that has the attributes of marl clay, while its density suggests that it is made from mixed clay (*Mischton*). This sherd comes from a jar with short neck. It seems to have been wheel thrown on a relatively fast wheel (fig. 13). The general form belongs to the mid-Eleventh Dynasty.³⁹ A sherd from a modern pot is also present within this group. It is made of Nile silt on a fast wheel with a 'sandwich' core. The interior and exterior surfaces are well-fired, while the core remains dark. This suggests firing to a high temperature but not for a long duration.

The other collection of sherds includes six sherds, with a weight of 0.199 kg. These include two diagnostic sherds made of Nile silt, two Nile silt body sherds, and two marl clay body sherds. These six sherds are significantly smaller in size than the ones discussed above, and hence the diameter and the shape could not be determined. The Nile silt pieces are a body sherd of a bread-mould and another from an open, red-coated vessel. The two diagnostic sherds include a base with a clear fingerprint and large, angular pieces of granite. This last feature is a general characteristic of pottery locally produced within the Aswan area.⁴⁰

The second diagnostic sherd comes from the rim of a flat bowl with lip on the inner rim (*Innenlippe*). This type of shallow vessels, usually made of NA2 fabric with red wash and simple burnishing, lost its popularity by the end of the Old Kingdom but became very fashionable again during the First Intermediate Period.⁴¹ What is

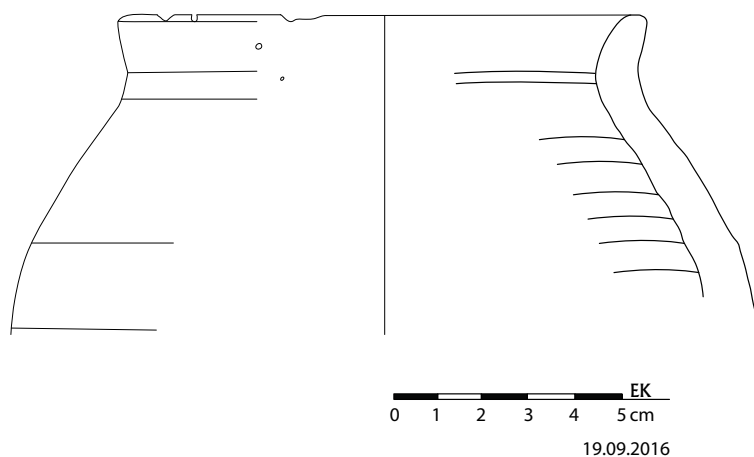


FIG. 13. Line drawing of a sherd from a jar with short neck.



FIG. 14. Rim sherd from a flat bowl with lip on the inner rim. Fattened rim obvious on the top right.

³⁸ T. Rzeuska, 'Zur Keramik des Mittleren Reiches', in W. Kaiser et al. (eds), 'Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine 25./26./27. Grabungsberichte', *MDAIK* 55 (1999), 195–204.

³⁹ Raue, in Kopp (ed.), *Elephantine* XXIV.

⁴⁰ T. Rzeuska, 'Dinner is Served: Remarks on Middle Kingdom Cooking Pots from Elephantine', in B. Bader and M. F. Ownby (eds), *Functional Aspects of Egyptian Ceramics in Their Archaeological Context: Proceedings of a Conference held at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge* (OLA 271; Leuven, 2013), 73–98.

⁴¹ A. Seiler, 'Zur Datierung der Stadtmauern A 2 und B des Neuen Reiches', in W. Kaiser et al. (eds), 'Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine 23./24. Grabungsberichte', *MDAIK* 53 (1997), 165–73.

remarkable about this particular piece is that it shows a mishap where the rim was slightly flattened while the clay was still wet (fig. 14).

Further up the hill, within the vicinity of the encroachment wall (Site A), a few more sherds were collected. These include a sherd from a carinated bowl, typical of the reign of Pepi II (Elephantine D-4, c.2260–2210 BC).⁴² This piece is made of NA2 fabric with red-slip on both the interior and exterior surfaces.⁴³ By contrast, sherds from this part of the cemetery have a higher percentage of marl clay and closed forms. This is not surprising, given the fact that this material is typical of storage jars found in tombs.

Preliminary analysis of pottery collected from the work of the Qubbet el-Hawa Research Project during the field season of September 2016 reveals an absence of Nubian pottery. Despite the region of the First Cataract being known for an overlap between Egyptian and Nubian cultures, as well as far-reaching influences, Nubian pottery was only discovered in varying amounts on the neighbouring island of Elephantine, dating to after the fourth millennium BC.⁴⁴ In general, the sherds discussed in this report are well represented by type but small in size and number. Assemblages are all mixed, dating from the Old Kingdom to the Late Period. Possible modern pottery was also present. Pottery from higher up the hill includes sherds that are much older than those from the foot of the hill. The forms have some similarities with forms from Elephantine, particularly those used in food serving and bread making.

⁴² I. Forstner-Müller and D. Raue, 'Elephantine and the Levant', in E. Engel and L. Kahl (eds), *Zeichen aus dem Sand: Streiflichter aus Ägyptens Geschichte zu Ehren von Günter Dreyer* (MENES 5; Wiesbaden, 2008), 127–48.

⁴³ Seiler, in Kaiser et al. (eds), *MDAIK* 53, fig. 20.1.

⁴⁴ C. Näser, 'Structure and Realities of Egyptian Nubian Interactions from the Late Old Kingdom to the Early New Kingdom', in D. Raue, S. Seidlmeyer, and P. Speiser (eds), *The First Cataract of the Nile: One Region—Diverse Perspectives* (SDAIK 36; Berlin, 2013), 136–48.